



***2010 Annual Report of the United Women Banja Luka,
Bosnia and Herzegovina***

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1. About “United Women” Banja Luka

“United Women” Banja Luka is nongovernmental organization founded on 16 August 1996 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the activities and projects of our association, we are advocating for improving social position of a woman, and her right to life without violence in a family and public life. We want to see more women at decision-making positions in official institutions at all levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our vision is "Woman aware of her power, equal, respected, employed, and happy."

Our mission is "Strengthening and affirmation of women through advocacy and work on implementation of women’s human rights."

Program Areas and Strategic Objectives of “United Women” Banja Luka:

A. Advocacy Against Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strategic Objectives: Ensuring efficient legal counseling, shelter, and other services for women and children victims of domestic violence, improving cooperation and coordination of NGOs and official institutions in fighting against violence against women, public advocacy for introducing gender sensitive and responsive budgeting in the area of fighting domestic violence against women, strengthening public awareness about gender based violence, monitoring implementation of domestic laws and international conventions and documents aimed to protect women from violence, as well as making influence on positive changes of discriminative laws and public policies in this area.

B. Media and Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strategic Objectives: Diminishing gender stereotypes in media, making influence on positive changes of media policies and programs to increase visibility and improve portrayal of women and women's issues in media, strengthening implementation of international conventions and documents aimed to improve gender equality in BiH media, gender sensitive education of women and men media professionals, creating possibilities for eliminating gender based discrimination in all fields of social economic, and political life through increasing public awareness about existence of Gender Equality Law in BiH, developing informed public opinion about gender based discrimination, and encouraging active participation of women and men citizens in actions aimed for improving women's position in our environment.

C. Gender Equality in Public and Political Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strategic Objectives: Empowering women to participate in political and social changes through their active role in creation of public policies and political decision making on local, entity, and state levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina, strengthening implementation of domestic laws and international conventions and documents aimed for ensure equality of women and men in public and political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and making influence on positive changes of discriminative laws and public policies in this area.

D. Advocacy Against Trafficking of People in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strategic Objectives: Increasing public awareness about the issue of trafficking of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially women and children, as the most vulnerable categories exposed to influence of criminal networks of human traffickers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, strengthening networking and common actions of women’s NGOs in BiH aimed to combat trafficking of women, and public advocacy for strengthening implementation of domestic laws and international conventions and documents in the area of combating trafficking of women.

2. Analysis of the Environment in Which We Implemented Our Activities During 2010

(In)Visibility of Women in Political Decision Making of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly advanced institutional framework for protection of women's human rights and gender equality through adoption of legislation, public policies, and establishing governmental institutions in this area, there is no sustainable progress in implementation and usage of these mechanisms in the practice.

Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as key umbrella law aimed to ensure protection of women's human rights and gender equality in BiH was adopted at the end of 2009. The Law introduced specific definitions of terms related to gender based discrimination and violence, listed specific authorities of the official institutions in this area, introduced judicial protection against gender based discrimination, and provided quota of at least 40% of less represented sex in bodies of legislative, executive, and judicial governance at all levels in BiH.¹ This opened legislative possibilities for progressive support aimed to ensure full participation of women in governance and decision-making, namely in the period prior to the general elections in 2010. However, in a short period after adoption of this Law, it became evident that its implementation in the practice will need comprehensive, systemic, and structural changes, namely gender responsive and responsible budgeting, and readiness of decision makers to enter reform processes in terms of raising gender awareness among public officials of both sexes. Equally important is to secure political support of key parliamentary political parties at all levels for these processes.

Women are still invisible in political negotiations about future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and important political talks involve only male political leaders with support of the international community. In the period prior to the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina held on 3 October 2010, representatives in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly again failed to harmonize the BiH Election Law with the provisions of the BiH Law on Gender Equality and international standards, regardless of continuous public advocacy and demands of women's civil society organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Results of 2010 General Elections from Women's Perspective

Out of two hundred and twenty three (223) mandates in entity and state parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, women won 40 mandates (or 17,9%). This represents decrease in parliamentary representation of women for almost 2% in relation to the results of general elections in 2006. There are governmental positions, which are still unreachable for women in Bosnia and Herzegovina; such are member of the joint Presidency of BiH, President, and Vice President of Republika Srpska, Prime minister (entity and state level), and President of the Assembly (entity and state level). In relation to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, women won eight (8) seats (or 19%) out of forty-two (42) seats in the House of Representatives, which represent small progress in comparison to 2006 election results, when women won six (6) seats. In relation to RS People's Assembly, women won eighteen (18) seats (or 21,69%), out of eighty-three (83) seats, which is small progress in comparison to 2006 election results, when women won sixteen (16) seats. In relation to FBiH Parliament, women won eighteen (18) seats (or 18,37%), out of ninety-eight (98) seats, which represents decrease in relation to the previous session when there was twenty-eight (28) women representatives. At the cantonal level of FBiH, women won forty-four (44) seats (or 15%), out of two hundred and eighty nine (289) seats in the cantonal assemblies.

Analysis of the 2010 elections shows that average 17% representation of women in legislative governance of BiH persists, regardless of the fact that there were more women bearers of candidate lists for the elections, and more women at lists for compensational mandates.

¹ Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina (refined text), Official Gazette of BiH, No. 32/10, from 22 April 2010, available on line on local language at web page of Gender Center of RS Government at: <http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/centri/gendercentarrs/Akcije/Documents/Zakon%20o%20ravnopravnosti%20polova%20u%20Bosni%20i%20Hercegovini%20preciscen%20tekst%20srp.pdf>

Process of establishing executive governance is still not completed at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and political crisis puts on hold processes of integration of BiH into European Union and NATO. Both international and local political analysts envisage this crisis can last for months. In such political environment, issues related to advancing gender equality and women's human rights in the practice are placed on margins of political agenda.

Significant progress was reached in terms of women's representation in the new Government of Republika Srpska, appointed at the end of December 2010 by the RS People's Assembly. *Five (5) women (or 31,25%) were appointed as ministers, out of sixteen (16) ministries in the Government of Republika Srpska, which is the highest representation of women at top decision-making positions in executive governance in newer history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Women are appointed as ministries in the following fields:

- Management and local self-governance,
- Economic relations and regional cooperation,
- Trade and tourism,
- Planning, construction and environment, and
- Family, youth, and sport.

Together with women's NGOs throughout BiH, "United Women" Banja Luka used period after the 2010 elections to publicly advocate for increasing participation of women in political decision-making and governance. We sent open letters and used participation in media programs to point at gender-based discrimination in political and public life of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and invited political leaders in BiH to enable women to participate equally in governance and decision making about future of BiH. We believe that our public advocacy efforts, as well as continuous cooperation and networking with women politicians and women in BiH media contributed to this change. Nada Tešanović, former Vice President of RS People's Assembly, and active members of our informal women's network is appointed as the Minister of Family, Youth, and Sport of RS. "United Women" Banja Luka will use upcoming period to extend public advocacy toward improving the support of this Ministry for full implementation of the laws and public policies in the area of protecting women from violence, and improving social status of women in Republika Srpska.

Lack of Progress in Prevention and Combating Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Violence against women as the most visible and persistent violation of women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to lack attention by official institutions at all levels. Although public policies in this field have been recently adopted and finalized - BiH Strategy on Prevention of Domestic Violence² (2009), Strategic Plan on Prevention of Domestic Violence in Federation of BiH for 2009 and 2010³, Strategy for Fighting Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska until 2013⁴ - specific actions planned within these documents miss support from the public budgets. Due to that, majority of the actions on prevention and countering violence against women are supported by UN agencies, such as UNDP and UNFPA⁵ or implemented through projects and programs of women's NGOs in BiH (e.g. legal aid services, psychosocial support for women and children victims, SOS telephones, safe houses for victims of violence, etc.) This issue raises questions in terms of sustainability of these policies and results in the practice.

Delays in payments of maternity leave, lack of strategies for fighting growing unemployment of women, lack of implementation of the special protection measures and prosecuting abusers in cases of domestic

² BiH Strategy on Prevention of Domestic Violence has been adopted by the BiH Parliamentary Assembly in June 2009

³ FBiH Strategic Plan on Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2009 and 2010 has been adopted by the FBiH Government in November 2008. Local language version of the Strategic Plan can be accessed at the official web page of the Gender Center of FBiH Government, at direct link: http://www.fgenderc.com.ba/bh/strateski_plan/strateski_plan_bos.pdf (last access on 17 February 2011)

⁴ Strategy for Fighting Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska until 2013 has been adopted by the RS People's Assembly on 17 December 2010. Local language version of the Strategy can be accessed at the official web presentation of the Gender Center of RS Government, at direct link: <http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/centri/gendercentarrs/Akcije/Documents/Strategija%20za%20borbu%20protiv%20nasilja%20u%20porodici%20u%20Republici%20Srpskoj%202013.%20godine,%20latinica.pdf> (last access on 17 February 2011)

⁵ At beginning of 2010, UNDP and UNFPA country offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated implementation of the project "Prevention and Combating Gender Based and Sexual Violence in BiH" through which they support key institutional mechanisms for gender equality at entity and country level to raise capacities to address gender-based violence.

violence, etc., reflect tendencies of deterioration of status of women, and lack of focus of the official institutions in BiH to ensure protection of women's human rights in the practice.

Legislative Framework in the Area of Women's Human Rights in BiH Still Lacks Harmonization and Compliance With the International Standards

Bosnia and Herzegovina made week progress in terms of complying with conclusions and recommendations of UN CEDAW Committee, especially in terms of strengthening executive authorities and functional role of the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and harmonization of legislation in Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH in the field of protection of women from domestic violence. Despite recommendation of the Committee to provide autonomy and more executive powers to the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, this institution is still part of the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, with weak executive powers, and limited role in influencing real improvements in the area of implementation of women's human rights and gender equality in the practice.

Laws on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH are still not harmonized, which leads to unequal treatment by the law, and prevents efficient protection and assistance to women and children as the most frequent victims of domestic violence. Principal areas of concern are unequal treatment of acts of domestic violence in two BiH entities, and different models of public budgets support for services for women and children victims of violence, especially safe houses.

In Republika Srpska, domestic violence has been considered both as criminal offence (as regulated by the Criminal Code of RS), and misdemeanor (as regulated by the RS Law on Protection of Domestic Violence), while in Federation of BiH, it is considered only as criminal offence (by FBiH Criminal Code). Domestic violence laws in both entities are recognizing special protection measures, aimed to protect victims of domestic violence (such are restraining order, accommodating victims of violence in the safe house, etc.) Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of RS contains provisions on obligatory planning and allocation of financial support for the safe houses from public budgets at entity and municipal level in ratio 70%:30%. Similar provision does not exist in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of FBiH, and safe houses for women and children victims of violence in this BiH entity are receiving only occasional one-time financial support from Government of FBiH, and are surviving on assistance of international organizations and agencies.⁶

During 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka continued to participate in activities of women's NGOs in FBiH aimed to secure financial support for the safe houses in FBiH from the public budgets, and contributed to the development of amendments to the FBiH Law on Protection from Domestic Violence to introduce obligatory planning and allocation of financial support for the safe houses from public budgets at entity, cantonal, and municipal levels in ratio 40%:30%:30%.

"United Women" Banja Luka continued to advocate for recognizing women and children victims of domestic violence as beneficiaries of social protection, and safe houses as institutions of social protection in the new RS Law on Social Protection. This Law is still in the draft version, and it is anticipated it will be on the parliamentary agenda sometime during 2011. Integration of our amendments in the Law would significantly improve access to financial support from the public budgets for women and children victims of violence, and improve status of the safe houses for victims of violence.

"United Women" Banja Luka closely monitors foreseen changes of the RS Family Law, and advocates for improving the status of single parents, especially developing mechanisms for efficient access to child support for underage children, issues of custody, care, etc. Human Rights Advisor of "United Women Banja Luka was appointed by the RS Ministry of Justice as the only representative of the civil society organizations in the process of changes and amendments of the RS Family Law initiated at the beginning of 2010.

Civil Society Monitoring and Reporting on Status of Women's Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka joined the coalition of women's NGOs in BiH coordinated by NGO "Rights for All" Sarajevo to prepare Shadow CEDAW Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period

⁶ Out of six (6) safe houses for women and children victims of violence in Federation of BiH, only the safe house run by the Foundation for Local Democracy in Sarajevo has partial financial support from the public budget of Canton Sarajevo

2006-2010.⁷ “United Women” Banja Luka was responsible for preparation of the chapter on violence against women and trafficking of women, with the final recommendations. We also contributed to the Report with preparing context and background analysis, and actively participated in public sessions organized in December 2010, with objective of presenting key areas of concern and recommendations. Participants of these sessions were women and men journalists, NGO activists, and public officials in BiH. The Report has been submitted to the CEDAW Committee, and will be discussed together with the Official BiH Periodical Report for CEDAW.⁸

This is the third shadow report on status of women’s human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina prepared with contribution of women’s civil society organizations. Civil society organizations’ data and reports indicate that violence against women, particularly domestic violence is widespread in BiH. However, specific issue of violence against Roma women has been greatly neglected although Roma women in BiH are often exposed to double discrimination, based on sex/gender and status of minority. In 2010, Romani women’s NGOs with support of NGO “Rights for All” Sarajevo conducted the field research and prepared the first Report on Domestic Violence against Roma Women in BiH in 2010⁹. This Report provides insides in different forms of violence and discrimination against Roma women in BiH, and presents results of the research conducted by 12 Roma women leaders in more then 20 Roma communities in BiH and interviews with 609 Roma women on different forms of violence and discrimination.

Discriminatory Portrayal of Women in Electronic and Printed Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Besides participation in Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2009/2010, “United Women” Banja Luka continued to monitor media reporting on issues related to women’s human rights and gender equality, with focus on media portrayal of violence against women and women in politics and decision-making. Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to violate privacy of women victims of violence, and frequently reveal their identity in media, exposing them to further trauma, public stigma, and condemnation. Underage victims are especially vulnerable to such human rights violation, and “United Women” Banja Luka and other women’s NGOs in BiH continuously address this problem in communication with media management structures and during campaigns of raising public awareness about gender based violence.

In March 2010, a case of young Roma girl which was exposed to forced prostitution and trafficked by a family member, was revealed as a top news story in electronic and printed media of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The case involved police investigations, arrests, and hearings by a prosecutor’s office of seventeen (17) adult men accused for abuse and exploitation. Some of the alleged abusers are on very influential positions in a local community (public officials, professors, police officers, religious teacher), and even one minister in state level government of BiH. Together with women’s NGOs in BiH joined in RING Anti-Trafficking Network of BiH, “United Women” Banja Luka reacted and publicly condemned the case, called media to protect identity of a victim, and official institutions in BiH to ensure security of a victim and undertake urgent measures to prosecute all persons responsible for this crime.

On 18 March 2010, United Women Banja Luka submitted complaints to the Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina in relation to articles published in BiH daily newspapers “Nezavisne novine”, “Glas Srpske”, “SAN,” and “Press RS” related to a case of sexual exploitation and abuse of the girl. Complaints were submitted based on severe violation of the BiH Press Code in relation to direct and indirect revealing of identity of a victim, which endangered children’s rights, personal and family life, safety, dignity, reputation and honor of a girl. Complaints were also related to instigating racial discrimination and intolerance in published articles in above listed printed media, through allusions on ethnical group and nationality of a victim, which, by opinion of “United Women” Banja Luka, does not have any direct or indirect connection with a case. Commission for Complaints of the BiH Press Council held its regular session on 19 March 2010 in Sarajevo, BiH, and examined complaints of “United Women” Banja Luka. The Commission identified

⁷ Shadow CEDAW Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2006 – 2010 is available online at direct link:

http://www.rightsforall.ba/eng/dw/alternativ_report.pdf

⁸ Bosnia and Herzegovina was obliged to prepare 4th and 5th periodical official report on implementation of CEDAW, and submit it to the CEDAW Committee for review and discussion in October 2010.

⁹ Report on Domestic Violence Against Roma Women in BiH in 2010 is available online at direct link:

http://www.rightsforall.ba/eng/dw/Romkinje_final_engl2%5BFINAL%5D.doc (last access on 16 February 2010)

violations of the BiH Press Code in parts related to the Article 11 – Protection of Children and Minors, Article 4a- Gender Equality and Respect of Individuality, and Article 9 – Privacy, and appealed on all editors of BiH printed media to have the approach focused on protection of underage victim in reporting on such cases, not to directly or indirectly reveal identity of a victim, allude on her character, and not to expose her to additional victimization, always having in mind interests of a child, as stated in the Article 11 of the BiH Press Code. The Commission also stated this is especially important in cases of open investigations related to specific criminal act in which children are appearing either as victims of as witnesses.

“United Women” Banja Luka continued cooperation with Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS) on preparation of serial of TV programs “In Focus” related to social and development topics of importance for women and men citizens, and topics related to women’s human rights and gender equality. These programs are continuously broadcasted twice a month since autumn 2009 program scheme, and so far, received positive feedback from women and men TV viewers. During 2010, more than 70% of programs “In Focus” were directly related to various topics related to women’s human rights and gender equality. “United Women” Banja Luka also supported RTRS in the process of preparing special TV programs and reports and ensuring news coverage focus on women’s and gender equality issues during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (25 November – 10 December), which significantly contributed to increasing public awareness on gender based violence, and reflected sustainable impact in terms of increased gender sensibility of programs at RTRS as one of three public broadcasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the period of one week before 2010 general elections in BiH, “United Women” Banja Luka conducted monitoring of three public broadcasters in BiH – Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHT1), Federal Television (FTV), and Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS). Monitoring of media focused on central news programs, press statements, presentations of political parties, and special TV programs related to the elections. Monitoring was conducted with usage of adjusted methodology of Global Media Monitoring Project from 2009-2010 (GMMP). Focus of the monitoring was to identify how many women were presented as subjects/direct participants and interviewed persons, and in which topics women and men were appearing as news subjects in media that were in focus of monitoring action. Media monitoring also focused on analyzing how and if appearance of women in news and programs is confirming gender stereotypes, challenges gender stereotypes, or represents gender neutral (or gender blind) portrayal.

In total 993 persons were identified as subjects of news and monitored TV programs, out of which 834 (83.99%) were men, and 159 (16.01%) were women. Having in mind that percentage of women candidates of political parties for general elections in BiH in 2010 ranged from 36.86% to 39.7%, media monitoring results reflect the fact that majority of women candidates did not have access to media presentations in the eve of 2010 general elections in BiH, which largely limited their possibilities to present themselves to women and men voters in BiH. Topics of the news and programs related to women in political power and decision-making and women as candidates at the elections appeared only sporadically at all three public broadcasters in BiH. Majority of stories in focus of monitoring had gender-neutral character or they were confirming gender stereotypes.

“United Women” Banja Luka appealed to the BiH Central Election Commission, as the institution authorized and responsible for implementation of the elections, to ensure gender sensitivity of the Rulebook on Media Presentation of Political Subjects in Period from Opening of the Election Process to Day of Elections, and require from political subjects and media in BiH to enable and ensure equal access in media presentations for women and men candidates at the elections. This change would ensure full support for implementation of domestic laws, as well as the international conventions and standards that are protecting equality of women and men in enjoying all human rights and freedoms, and prohibit discrimination at any basis, including gender. We also emphasized it is necessary that BiH public media ensure gender sensitive approach in relation to subjects of news and programs, with ensuring increasing number of women appearing in stories, either in role of experts for certain social, economic and political issues (expert opinion) or in role of citizens (popular opinion), and enable them to express their views on important news-making issues.

In upcoming period, "United Women" Banja Luka will continue to work with informal network of women journalists and media management structures in BiH, to advance gender-mainstreaming processes in media of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3. Key Results of the Activities of "United Women" Banja Luka in 2010

Activities of United Women Banja Luka in 2010 were directly linked to the four program areas and strategic objectives the Association.

A. Advocacy Against Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During 2010, United Women Banja Luka implemented three projects and one campaign within this program area:

A.1 Woman and Law – Providing Free Legal and Psychosocial Assistance for Women Victims of Violence and Public Advocacy Against Violence Against Women, implemented in partnership with Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, with support of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden.

A.2 Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka, with support of the Government of Republika Srpska, and City Administration Banja Luka.

A.3 Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka, in partnership with the Center for Public Security Banja Luka and Center for Social Work Banja Luka, with support of the City Administration Banja Luka

A.4 Empowered Women for Social Justice, with support of the Open Society Institute, International Women's Program

A.5 Campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with support of EED Germany and Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden

A.1 Woman and Law - Providing Free Legal and Psychosocial Assistance for Women Victims of Violence

Overall project objective is strengthening and improving position of women within our society - in family as well as in the public life through elimination of all forms of violence against women and reaching equality between women and men. Specific project objective in 2010 was reduced legal insecurity of women victims of violence in Banja Luka region, improved institutional response, and care about women victims of violence, and cooperation and coordination with local women's NGOs in four targeted local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banja Luka, Višegrad, Bratunac, and Tomislavgrad). United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka are implementing this project since 1997.

Results in 2010:

Increased legal security of women victims of violence in wide Banja Luka region and increased free access to legal advices and information about their rights of women victims of violence and domestic violence all ages and social status from Banja Luka region

During 2010, United Women Banja Luka professional team (Practicing Lawyer/Attorney and Lawyer) was providing continuous legal assistance to women victims of violence in wider Banja Luka region. Women victims of violence had assistance of SOS volunteers provided through SOS telephone. In the period from 1 January to 31 December 2010, we provided free legal advice and information for two hundred and forty seven (247) women, and legal assistance for ninety three (93) women that contacted our office. This represents increase in relation to the same period in 2009, when we provided free legal information and advice for two hundred and fourteen (214) women and legal assistance for seventy (70) women that contacted our office.

SOS volunteers provided psychological support and information to one thousand five hundred and sixteen (1516) women that called SOS telephone, which represents increase in relation to 2009, when six hundred and eighty eight (688) women called SOS telephone and received help.

Lawyer Advisor and Lawyer Attorney also provided continuous free legal advices and assistance to women beneficiaries of the Safe House Banja Luka.

Visible progress in implementation of BiH laws aimed for prevention and treatment of violence against women on local level, and BiH as the whole, and improved response of women and men professionals in providing protection for women victims

Through activities of the Safe House Banja Luka during 2010, we contributed in successful implementation of the special protection measure of sheltering victims of violence, and providing them urgent assistance and care. Based on the Domestic Violence Law of Republika Srpska, financial support for the safe houses for women and children victims of violence in Republika Srpska for 2010 was planned in the local public budget of Banja Luka and entity budget of Republika Srpska. "Woman and Law" project staff continued to work with women's NGOs in both BiH entities to develop joint platform for introducing this provision in the Domestic Violence Law of Federation of BiH, as well as to develop and implement joint standards and methodology for work of the safe houses for women and children victims of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through education of women and men representatives of local official institutions, namely police, center for social work, and municipal administrations in Višegrad and Bratunac we were able to present our experiences in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Law in RS, and work together with women and men participants at the workshops on developing specific recommendations aimed to improve protection of women victims. Key recommendation from these activities point at need for more coherent and coordinated work of local official institutions, continuous education and increasing sensibility of women and men professionals for issues of violence against women and domestic violence, and cooperation with local NGOs in providing assistance for women victims of violence.

Improved knowledge of women and men professionals in local official institutions about all aspects of violence against women and existing laws and public policies in this field and improved cooperation and coordination of local official institutions and women's NGOs in targeted local communities on prevention and treatment of violence against women and domestic violence

Thirty one (31) women and men representatives of police, centers for social work, municipal administrations, schools, and NGOs from Višegrad and Bratunac participated in two one – day workshops aimed to build knowledge on new BiH laws and public policies in fighting violence against women. Concrete recommendations for enhancing coordination and cooperation of local official institutions and women's NGOs on prevention and fighting violence against women defined by participants at the workshops reflect improved sensitivity and knowledge about nature and impact of domestic violence on women victims, need for more efficient protection, and coordination of all institutions and local NGOs.

In a group evaluations conducted after the workshops, all women and men participants confirmed they have increased understanding of issues related to domestic violence and position of women victims. Majority of participants assessed topics discussed during workshops as very useful for their future work, and some participants said that practical examples of procedures used during concrete field interventions in cases of domestic violence helped them to improve their future work with victims of domestic violence. Participants also emphasized usefulness of learning about experiences and good practices of assisting to women and children victims of domestic violence in a Safe House Banja Luka, as well as functioning of a Mobile Team for Field Interventions in Cases of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka region.

A.2 Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence from the Banja Luka Region

Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence in region of Banja Luka was founded on the initiative of NGO "United Women" Banja Luka, and was opened for the first beneficiaries on 12 February 2007. In the period from 1 January until 31 December 2010, shelter and full care, assistance, and support in the Safe House Banja Luka was provided for thirty three (33) women and thirty six (36) children - 63% of girls and 37% of boys that were sheltered in the Safe House together with their mothers. Women and children victims of violence were coming from all areas of Republika Srpska.

Out of 33 women beneficiaries of the Safe House Banja Luka in 2010, 67% of women started independent life upon exiting the Safe House, while 33% of women returned to the family community. Average age of women beneficiaries of the Safe House Banja Luka in 2010 was 36. 70% of women beneficiaries were unemployed, 12% pensioners, and 18% students. In 2010, the most frequent abusers were marital partners (57,5%), and common law partners (24,2%). Combined violence that lasted up to five years (45,4%) was reported as the most prevalent in 2010.

Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka (Mobile Team) makes decision about sheltering women and children victims of violence with place of residence in Banja Luka region. This Team operates since 1 May 2007, as joint initiative of the Center for Public Security Banja Luka, Center for Social Work Banja Luka and United Women.

A.3 Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka

Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence (Mobile Team) Banja Luka has been established in 2007, based on the Protocol for Assistance and Support to Victims of Domestic Violence, signed by the City Administration Banja Luka, Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Center for Public Security Banja Luka, and nongovernmental organization United Women Banja Luka. Mobile Team was established with objective of immediate and efficient protection of victims of domestic violence, and undertaking adequate measures of immediate protection of victims, and necessary actions for initiating judicial procedure against abusers.

Members of the Team are representatives of the police-police officers authorized for city region where a case of domestic violence is reported, representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, and representative of the nongovernmental organization United Women Banja Luka.

Representative of United Women Banja Luka on duty shift joins the Mobile Team upon call from the representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka. Together they at the place where domestic violence was reported. Mobile Team is active 24/7, including weekends, and holidays.

During 2010, we identified trend that police officers fail to inform us when they conduct field interventions, as there are numerous cases of violence reported by women at SOS telephone, when they inform us that police came and did nothing to protect them. "United Women" Banja Luka team members participated in hundred and fifty eight (158) field interventions in cases of domestic violence in Banja Luka, while in ninety one (91) interventions police and Center for Social Work Banja Luka failed to invite us with justification that reported cases did not have characteristics of domestic violence, or were related to some other criminal act. Official statistics of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Police) for 2010 show increase of reported criminal acts of domestic violence for 2.4 % in relation to 2009.¹⁰

Negative trend of qualifying majority of cases of domestic violence as minor offences by police of Republika Srpska continued in 2010. Police continues to submit criminal reports against abusers to authorized prosecutors' offices only in cases of severe violence, e.g. when heavily body injuries occurred. We are concerned with such tendencies, as they may lead to creating public climate that domestic violence and violence against women is decreasing in BiH society, and that there is no need for keeping services for victims of violence, which is far from real need at the field. Methodology of collection and systematization of the official data on violence against women is still missing.

A.4 Empowered Women for Social Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Overall objective of the project is to enable women from urban and rural parts of Republika Srpska, BiH to receive information, increase understanding, and ability to claim their social rights guaranteed by the laws treating social protection in Republika Srpska, especially the new Law on Social Protection of RS. United

¹⁰ Information on Status of Security for the Period from 1 January to 31 December 2010, Ministry of the Interior Affairs of Republika Srpska, Available on BHS at direct link: http://www.mup.vladars.net/statistike_pdf/cir/2746101207265699.pdf (last access on 17 January 2011)

Women Banja Luka is implementing this project in the period from July 2009 to July 2011, with the support of the Open Society Institute, International Women's Program.

Following the research on knowledge and understanding of social rights and social assistance guaranteed by the law that was implemented in thirty nine (39) local communities in Republika Srpska, BiH during 2009, United Women Banja Luka organized nine public discussions and nine radio programs on social rights of women in Banja Luka, Gradška, Derventa, Bijeljina, Milići, Zvornik, Višegrad, Foča and Rogatica.

Project activities are organized in close cooperation with the local centers for social work and nongovernmental organizations, namely Association of the People with Disabilities, Single Parents Association, NGO Mother Nature, Gender Center of the Republika Srpska Government and NGO Women can do it; in Gradiška with Local Development Agency and NGO Women and Family, in Derventa NGO Women's Association Derventa, in Foča Local Democratic Center, Association of Refugees and Association of Parents with 4 and more Children; in Rogatica Youth Council and Women's Association "SNOP", and in Višegrad with Democratic Center Višegrad and Association of Women Suffering from Breast Cancer "Aska".

A.5 Campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Enhanced common voice of women's NGOs in protection of women's human rights and promotion of gender equality in BiH

In 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka focused to enhance cooperation with women's NGOs throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina on preparation, coordination, and implementation of the activities within the Campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in BiH. Thanks to the contribution and resources from Kvinna till Kvinna and the Project "Gender Equality in BiH – Informed Public Opinion and Gender Sensitive Media" supported by EED Germany, we were able to translate 2010 Take Action Kit for the Global Campaign into local language, organize one working meeting with women's NGOs in BiH (in September 2010) in order to plan activities of the Campaign, and prepare joint BiH Calendar of Activities. Joint activities of the Campaign were coordinated street actions, distribution of info leaflets, press conferences, and round tables. Activists of United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka were supported by women journalists in street action on 25 November, the International Day of Fighting Violence Against Women, when we distributed leaflets, info material to women and men citizens of Banja Luka.

We enhanced visibility and impact of the BiH Campaign through disseminating information via e-mail list serves in the region (in Serbia – zenskaposla and Croatia cik-cak net), as well as communication with the Center for Global Women's Leadership, which published BiH Calendar of Activities and translation of 2010 Toolkit on their web page. In total twenty-two (22) women's NGOs, one TV station (public broadcaster Radio Television of Republika Srpska), and one international organization (UNIFEM branch office Sarajevo, BiH) from thirteen cities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (Zenica, Sarajevo, Višegrad, Tuzla, Derventa, Gradiška, Jajce, Banja Luka, Modriča, Bihać, Bratunac, Mostar and Milići) contributed to the joint Calendar with sharing information about their planned actions. The Calendar was sent to all organizations that contributed to the Calendar, as well as other women's and human rights NGOs in BiH, international organizations, key institutional mechanisms for gender equality (Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, Gender Center of Republika Srpska Governments, and Gender Center of Federation of BiH Government), other governmental and public institutions authorized to work on prevention and fighting violence against women and gender based violence, as well as BiH media.

On the occasion of 25 November, the International Day of Fighting Against Violence Against Women, representatives of the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka facilitated workshop on violence against women and domestic violence, with participation of female activists of Youth Association Sipovo. The workshop was held as a part of the project "Bee-Hive – Woman Leader," organized by the Association "Kult" Sarajevo and "BiH Expert" Sarajevo.

B. Media and Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina

B.1 Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina = Informed Public Opinion and Gender Sensitive Media

United Women Banja Luka is implementing this project since 2005, with support of Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), from Germany and partnership with Amica e.V. from Freiburg, Germany. Development goal of the project is to create possibilities for diminishing gender-based discrimination in all fields of social, economic, and political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina through increasing gender sensibility of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, strengthening an informed public opinion about gender discrimination, and advocacy for improving position of women in our environment.

Results in 2010:

Enhanced cooperation and networking of women's nongovernmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and region on promotion of women's human rights and gender equality

Women's NGOs throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina increased cooperation through participation in gender and media monitoring initiative, networking and capacity building meeting, and activities of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH, and worked together on raising public awareness and public advocacy for protection of women's human rights in the practice. Eighteen (18) women representatives of eleven (11) women's NGOs throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina worked together on developing joint strategy for using gender and media monitoring results, and organizing campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH. Cooperation of women's NGOs in BiH on fighting violence against women improved, and gained media attention through news programs, and special thematic programs, such as "In Focus" at Radio Television of Republika Srpska. Cooperation with women's civil society organizations in BiH increased through planning and implementation of joint public advocacy actions aimed to change gender discriminative legislation in BiH, and secure legislative and real protection of women and children victims of violence.

In the process of preparing 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH 2010 Campaign, women's NGOs in BiH developed joint letter to public authorities at all levels in BiH, and requested their specific actions to respond on violence against women, as follows: ensuring better implementation of laws in the area of protecting women from violence, ensuring that cases of violence against women are not hidden, and are properly recorded in official data bases, improving legislation on protection of women from violence, ensuring protection of human rights of women victims of domestic violence, and their free access to the judicial protection in criminal proceedings, as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. The letter was sent by women's NGOs in BiH simultaneously on 24 November 2010, in the eve of the International Day of Fighting Violence Against Women;

During 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH, street actions were organized by thirteen (13) women's NGOs in eleven (11) cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Zenica, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Bratunac, Milići, Jajce, Derventa, Mostar, Modriča, and Višegrad, with participation of hundred and twenty nine (129) women and men NGO activists that distributed leaflets and info materials on prevention and fighting gender based violence to women and men citizens;

Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted complaints against four daily newspapers related to gender biased reporting and revealing identity of underage girl victim of sexual abuse, violence, and trafficking.

Conducted gender media monitoring in BiH in 2010, and women and men journalists, NGO activists, public officials and women and men citizens demonstrate increased awareness about country, regional and global context of gender equality issues in media of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Collected and processed data on gender and media monitoring for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of Gender Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2009/2010. Two (2) qualitative case studies focusing on gender blind news story/missed opportunities, and news story that confirms gender stereotypes prepared. Prepared and printed BiH Gender and Media Monitoring Report 2009/2010, with support of the World Association for Christian Communications (WACC), and distributed to women's NGOs, electronic and printed media in BiH, institutional mechanisms for gender equality and media regulatory mechanisms. At

the press conference on 24 November 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka presented key results and recommendations of Gender and Media Monitoring Report (GMMP) for BiH, and appealed on media and public institutions to intensify their support and actions aimed to improve portrayal and access of women to media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through feedback communication and exchange of data and information, women and men NGO activists and journalists that participated in gender and media monitoring confirm increased knowledge about purpose of media monitoring and using results to advocate against gender based discrimination. Through feedback communication and exchange of data and information, women and men NGO activists and journalists confirmed usefulness of learning and using GMMP methodology, and participating in GMMP initiative increased their understanding of regional and global context of gender equality issues in media.

Local public officials, NGOs and media initiated activities on fighting gender based discrimination, domestic violence, and securing equal access of women to media in targeted local communities, and women and men citizens of local communities informed about issues related to gender violence and gender-based discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH, two round table discussions were organized in Zenica and Mostar, with participation of fifty-two (52) women and men NGO activists, public officials, journalists, teachers, politicians, and social workers. They discussed and planned concrete actions on local level aimed to promote and protect women's human rights and gender equality, which include strengthening support from local official institutions for work of local women's NGOs in fighting violence against women and strengthening participation of women in public and political life, enhancing cooperation of women politicians and women NGO activists on promoting women's role in political decision making, and supporting awareness raising and gender based violence prevention programs in elementary and secondary schools. Participation of "United Women" Banja Luka project staff in media programs and interviews in electronic and printed media of BiH was used to emphasize key data on gender based discrimination of women, as well as the obstacles that women face in realization of their rights in the practice. Press conference of United Women Banja Luka on 8 March 2010 gathered 22 women and men participants, representatives of academia, civil society organizations, cultural centers, foreign embassies, and nine (9) electronic and printed media in BiH. United Women Banja Luka presented key issues related to gender discrimination in employment and labor, universities, and initiatives that promote women individuals that actively contributed in social and cultural development of Banja Luka.

During 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH, five (5) press conferences were organized by women's NGOs in Bijeljina, Banja Luka, Jajce, Sarajevo, and Bihać, with participation of forty-one (41) women and men journalists from thirty (30) electronic and printed media and news agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina that prepared reports and articles on the Campaign, and issues related to gender violence and gender based discrimination.

C. Gender Equality in Public and Political Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina

C.1 Woman Today - 2010 - Promoting Women's Participation in Public and Political Life implemented in partnership with Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, with support of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden.

C.2 Action for Equal Participation and Opportunities for Women in Politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina with support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation from Germany.

C.1 Woman Today - 2010 - Promoting Women's Participation in Public and Political Life

United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka are implementing this project since 1997, with support of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden. Long-term goal of the project is decreasing of all forms of gender-based discrimination of women, and creating environment in which women and men have equal opportunities. Specific project objective in 2010 was increasing number and influence of women in parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections in 2010, and increasing gender sensitive and responsible policies at the local level.

Key Results in 2010:

- Hundred and twenty four (124) women citizens of Banja Luka participated at four (4) public discussions and expressed opinion on actual issues and topics – status and protection of women’s human rights and gender equality in the practice in BiH, economy of care, valuing women’s unpaid labor, and access of women to employment and economic resources, women in the public service and pre-election campaign, invisibility of women and women’s issues in media of BiH in the period prior to 2010 general elections. As result of conclusions and recommendations defined at these public discussions, specific public advocacy and lobbying activities were initiated with objective of improving position of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Increased media focus on women’s issues and importance of women’s participation in politics and decision making through five (5) special TV programs broadcasted at Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS). We pointed at marginalization of women, supported women candidates, lobbied for changes of the Election Law of BiH, and emphasized importance of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in BiH. TV discussion broadcasted in August 2010 featured five (5) women candidates for the elections, out of which two (2) women candidates were elected as representatives in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska. The largest number of women that won seats in the Assembly is from the Election Unit no.2 in which we implemented part of the project activities;
- Women participants of the round table „Women and Parliamentary Elections 2010”, organized on 19 November 2010 developed specific recommendations and sent appeals to the decision makers to pay attention on the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant documents that promote equal representation of women at decision making positions at all levels of governance, in the process of creating the executive governance in Republika Srpska;
- Organized street action “Our Choice is a Woman, What Is Yours” in Banja Luka in the eve of 2010 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and invited women and men citizens to support female candidates regardless of their political affiliation;
- Produced the movie with title "**Life in the Campaign of a Woman Candidate – I Can Do It**“, based on personal diaries of women candidates for the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008. The movie was publicly presented, and used as educational tool for work with women candidates for 2010 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Fifty-two (52) women candidates at 2010 general elections in BiH and young women politicians representatives of political parties in BiH participated at two (2) capacity building workshops, and learned practical skills of public and media presentations, conducting pre-election campaigns, and public advocacy;
- Enhancing networking and joint activities of women’s nongovernmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, and developed and sent joint protest letter related to lack of women’s participation in negotiations on future organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

C.2 Action for Equal Participation and Opportunities for Women in Politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Overall project objective was diminishing gender-based discrimination of women in public and political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and creating environment in which women and men have equal possibilities. Specific project objectives were following:

- Increasing awareness, skills, and knowledge of women politicians in BiH on gender equality, election processes, and importance of women’s participation to improve position of women in public and political life in BiH;
- Empowering women candidates to take active role in communication with the women and men voters and media during the campaign for 2010 general elections in BiH;
- Increasing awareness about need of enhanced media visibility of women politicians, and their active participation in election campaigns in BiH;
- Strengthening cooperation of women politicians and women NGO activists, and working together on enhancing participation, public visibility, and influence of women in public and political life of BiH.

Key Results in 2010:

- Hundred and eight (108) women members of political parties from thirty seven (37) cities in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in three basic capacity building workshops for women members of political parties, and three advanced workshops for women candidates at the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina held in October 2010;
- Twenty one (21) women newly elected representatives in legislative governance at entity and state level of Bosnia and Herzegovina from twelve (12) cities in both entities of BiH and women NGO representatives participated in two round tables aimed to define women's political priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Analysis of the evaluation questionnaires, feedback received from round table participants and facilitators indicate that women workshop participants show increased awareness, skills, and knowledge on gender equality, election processes, and importance of women's participation to improve position of women in public and political life in BiH;
- Feedback information received through round tables with women that won seats in entity and state parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina indicate that knowledge and information received through capacity building workshops contributed to increased self-confidence and abilities of women to participate in pre-election campaign, namely to articulate their views and present them to the public. They confirmed that activities of women within political parties, as well as their contribution to overall political work shows gradual progress in terms of changing value systems, and considering gender equality as one of the factors that can contribute to gaining more supporters of political platforms, as well as voter's support at the election;
- Developed document of the Program Platform for Priorities of Cooperation of Women elected in Legislative Governance Institutions: Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Parliament of FBiH, People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, and Women Active in Nongovernmental Organizations for the Period 2010 – 2014. This document was developed based on joint planning process at the round tables, with the contribution of women politicians that won seats in the entity and state parliament of BiH. Women politicians, representatives in parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to promote the Program Platform, and work together on realization of defined priorities and activities in a follow up period;
- Pre-election media monitoring on media visibility of women and their active participation in the pre-election campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted.

D. Advocacy Against Trafficking of People in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka continued with public advocacy activities and education about the issue of trafficking of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, targeting specifically young boys and girls.

In period from 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010, "United Women" Banja Luka participated as a partner in implementation of the project **"Comprehensive Approach in Solving the Issue of Child Pornography in Bosnia and Herzegovina."** The Project was implemented by the Ministry of Security of BiH – Department for Fighting Trafficking of People, the Association International Forum of Solidarity – Emmaus, in cooperation with OAK Foundation and Save the Children Norway.

The main objective of the project was prevention of child's pornography, and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina with using informational and communication technology. The project activities included establishing free SOS line for assistance and reporting the cases of abuse, offering information to children and parents, implementation of a mini-campaign of prevention and awareness rising of children in risk and their parents about dangers and possible abuses of information and communication technologies for the purpose of exploiting children, and child pornography in general. One of the project objectives was to establish unique data base consisting of information about criminal offenders in this field, and joining to the network of web portals that are promoting safe usage of Internet, and organization of educational workshops for children of risk age in elementary and secondary schools of BiH, their parents, members of school councils, and teachers, with objective of the raising awareness about existence of this issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its prevention.

“United Women” Banja Luka was the key partner in implementation of thirty (30) workshops in elementary schools in twenty six local communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as follows: Kotor Varoš, Čelinac, Gradiška, Banja Luka, Prijedor, Doboj, Modriča, Teslić, Kozarska Dubica, Bijeljina, Višegrad, Bosanska Krupa, Bihać, Ključ, Travnik, Jajce, Cazin, Velika Kladuša, Mostar, Brčko Distrikt, Sanski Most, Trebinje, Sarajevo, Bratunac, Zenica, and Novi Grad. In total 1061 persons participated in the education - 731 boys and girls students of final grades, 98 teachers, and 100 parents.

Workshops were implemented by a team of trainers - Lana Jajčević, Project Coordinator from “United Women” Banja Luka, Boris Ivanović, Head of Department for Operative Support of the SIPA Sarajevo, and Eneid Hasanović, Independent Inspector in Department for Fighting Trafficking of People, Sexual Offences, Juvenile Delinquency and Domestic Violence of Criminal Police Unit of MIA Federation of BiH.

4. Public Advocacy Actions Aimed to Improve Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Date: 8 March 2010

Subject: Changes and Amendments of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

For: Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

From: United Women Banja Luka; Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka

We are inviting the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to reaffirm the principle of gender equality in a year when we commemorate the International Women’s Day under motto: “Equal Rights, Equal Possibilities – Progress for All”, and request harmonization of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina with this principle.

We believe that harmonization of the Election Law in the process of its changes and amendments with the Gender Equality Law adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in the same composition on 4 November 2009 represents obligation of our country, both toward women of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and toward requests of the international bodies and regional organizations that Bosnia and Herzegovina is membership country.

We are reminding that the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Gender Equality Law of BiH¹¹, Article 6 that changes the Article 15 regulates that ...the state bodies at all levels of governance and local self-governance bodies, including legislative, executive and judicial governance [...], are obliged to ensure and promote equal representation of sexes in management, decision making, and representation, and that equal representation of sexes exists when one of the sexes is represented at least 40% in above listed bodies... Opposite situations represent gender based discrimination...

We are reminding that UN Committee for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on its 35th session (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/3, on 2 June 2006), in Points 29 and 30, expressed concerns because of lack of women’s representation in decision making processes, and invited Bosnia and Herzegovina to harmonize the Election Law with the Gender Equality Law of BiH, as well as to strengthen and implement measures for greater representation of women in elected bodies: „29 -While noting that the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides for equal representation in decision-making processes, the Committee is concerned that the recent amendments to the election law did not incorporate this aspect (...) 30. The Committee urges the State party to harmonize the election law with the Law on Gender Equality and to strengthen and implement measures to increase the representation of women in elected and appointed bodies and in decision-making positions in public administration, the judiciary and in positions in State-owned companies (...)”¹².

¹¹Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Official Gazette of BiH No. 102/09, from 29 December 2009

¹² Concluding comments of the Committee for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Bosnia and Herzegovina, CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/3, from 2 June 2006, Points 29 and 30

We are emphasizing that in its latest Resolution related to increasing participation of women in politics¹³, adopted on 27 January 2010, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe addresses obstacles that women face in enjoying their rights on equal participation in public and political life, and urges member states to, among other, consider introducing legal quota for ensuring not only high percentage of participation of female candidates (ideally at least 40%), but also strict rule of order rank (for example, "zipper" system with alternate distributing of male and female candidates), and efficient sanctions for violation of these rules [...].

Having in mind above listed facts, we are proposing following:

To change the Article 4.19 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and all other articles that refer on this article, on the way to ensure participation of less represented sex with at least 40%, applying the principle of alternate candidates of both sexes on the lists, as well as all the articles in the current text of the law that enable discrimination, especially the Article 4.24 of the Law.

Banja Luka, 8 March 2010

United Women Banja Luka
Nada Golubović, Executive Director

Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka
Lidija Živanović, Executive Director

Bijeljina, 17 March 2010

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Nongovernmental organizations – members of the „RING“ Network Against Trafficking of People in Bosnia and Herzegovina are deeply concerned with new affair related to sexual exploitation of underage girl from Bratunac. During period of last three years, we are continuously pointing at the issue that victims of trafficking of people are female citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are underage in majority of cases. We are requesting from the official authorities to finally harmonize all legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with COE Convention on Trafficking of People, which Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified in 2007. We are also requesting persecution of perpetrators of trafficking of people and imposing strict penalties for such acts, in order to act preventively to stop these horrifying crimes.

New case from Bratunac shows that monstrous acts of sexual exploitation of children are repeating, and we are appealing at official authorities to seriously address these issues, identify perpetrators, and impose strict penalties, as well as to enable victims of trafficking full protection and conditions for undisturbed recovery.

We strongly protest against way of media reporting on this case. Although the case involves an underage girl, media revealed her identity, even photographs, which is extremely inappropriate and opposite to legal regulations and ethical standards. Therefore, we appeal to media of Bosnia and Herzegovina to cease sensationalistic reporting related to this case, and pay attention on human rights of the victim and her protection.

Nongovernmental organizations, members of „RING“ Network Against Trafficking of People in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

1. Citizens' Association "Future", Modriča
2. Women's Association "Lara", Bijeljina
3. Women's Association "Bridge" , Višegrad
4. Association "United Women", Banja Luka
5. Association "Woman BiH", Mostar
6. Women's Association "Goraždanke", Goražde
7. Women's Association "Maja" Kravica, Bratunac

¹³ RES 1706 (2010) from 27 January 2010 http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/ATListingDetails_E.asp?ATID=11146, last access on 2 March 2010

8. Women's Association „Derventa“, Derventa
9. Association of Romani Woman "Better Future", Tuzla
10. Roma Association "Otaharin", Bijeljina
11. Women's Association "Women to Women", Sarajevo
12. "Infoteka" Women's Information and Documentation Center, Zenica

Banja Luka, 10 May 2010

To:

H.E. Valentin Inzko, the High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina
H.E. Alejandro Alvargonzales San Martin, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain in Bosnia and Herzegovina
H.E. Bosse W. Hedberg, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in Bosnia and Herzegovina
H.E. Charles English, Ambassador of the United States of America in Bosnia and Herzegovina

P R O T E S T

Concerned with the previous course of negotiations related to status of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accession process to the European Union, women representatives of nongovernmental organizations united in the Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina are reminding that there is no true democracy without equal participation of women. We are demanding from the representatives of the international community and BiH political leaders to ensure direct and meaningful involvement of women in continuation of negotiations about constitutional changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Women were absent from all previous negotiation teams that were deciding about destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Latest talks held in Butmir again failed to involve women in discussions about future organization of our country, which should affect all women and men citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that all previous negotiations were non-transparent, and without paying attention on gender balance, which was requested and endorsed by the resolutions, declarations, rule books, and road maps in force when making decisions on the level of the European Union.

Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina believe that future negotiations in BiH must not continue with the practice of ignoring and excluding women. We demand at least 40% of women to join the negotiation process about future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and full endorsement of 1706 (2010) Resolution of the Council of Europe in making any important decision about future of our country.

If the international community ignores this issue, it also encourages BiH politicians to continue with the practice of discrimination of women, and violation of BiH laws, namely the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and tolerates ignorance of BiH obligations taken over with signing of the international and regional contracts.

Women should participate in negotiations in order to have the opportunity to provide different perspective, and direct negotiations toward needs and interests of common citizens of this country, which cannot live from "the principle of constitutional representation."

We are demanding from the representatives of the international community to take our protest into consideration, and prevent that only men are deciding about destiny of women and men citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina!

On behalf of the Women's Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Nada Golubović
Executive Director

Lidija Živanović
Executive Director

5. Strengthening Cooperation with Other Nongovernmental Organizations and Official Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Abroad

Accomplished Results in 2010

“United Women” Banja Luka continued to work on strengthening our visibility in local and regional environment and improving cooperation, exchange of information and joint initiatives with other nongovernmental organizations in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the region. Through various project activities of our Association and public advocacy initiatives aimed to fight violence against women and increase participation and influence of women in political decision making at all levels, we improved cooperation with local women's organizations.

“United Women” Banja Luka joined coalition of women's and human rights organizations in implementation of the project **“101 Reason Why to Vote for Women”** aimed to increase number of elected women on 2010 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and changing awareness about status and role of women in BiH society. Project was implemented by TPO Foundation Sarajevo, Association “Info House” Sarajevo, Foundation “Cure” Sarajevo, Association “Voice of a Woman” Bihac, Association “United Women” Banja Luka, Women's Association “Lara” Bijeljina, Women's Association “Medica” Zenica, Association “Li Woman” Livno, Association “Woman BiH” Mostar, Association “Women's Forum” Bratunac, Association “Vesta” Tuzla, Youth Association “BD” Brcko District, Citizens' Association “Grahovo” Grahovo, with support of the Embassy of Switzerland, Swiss Cooperation Office Bosnia and Herzegovina, Heinrich Boll Stiftung Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Project activities were implemented in thirty six (36) cities, and hundred and five (105) rural communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and included collecting 101 statements of public persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina on reasons why women and men voters should support women at 2010 general elections, education of women voters, radio programs, street actions, and distribution of campaign material in local communities.

At the regional level, “United Women” Banja Luka actively participated in activities of establishing **Regional Peace Network** that involves around thirty (30) women's and human rights civil society organizations from all countries in the area of former Yugoslavia. The Network symbolically announced its start commemorating the International Day of Women for Peace and Disarmament, on 24 May 2010. Key objectives of the Network are developing culture of peace and non-violence, and making continuous, visible, and efficient influence on local, national, and regional policies, culture, sport, young people, etc. in order to change and develop societies that will contribute to peace, coexistence, and stability of the region. Work of the Network in public, voluntarily, responsible, and completely devoted to reaching cultural and political changes toward peace building, and society without violence against oppressed. Current members of the Network are following organizations: “HOMO” Pula, Croatia, “CERD” Split, Croatia, “ŽAR” Rijeka, “Safe Women's House” Podgorica, Montenegro, “ANIMA” Kotor, Montenegro, “Action for human Rights” Podgorica, Montenegro, “EXPEDITIO” Podgorica, Montenegro, “Women's Lobby of Montenegro”, “House of Hope” Montenegro, “League of Women Voters” Montenegro, “IMPULS” Tutin, Serbia, “Women's Lobby of Belgrade” Serbia, “HORA” Valjevo, Serbia, “Center for Peace and Education” Belgrade, Serbia, “Cultural Center DamaD” Novi Pazar, Serbia, “NO Mobbing” Belgrade, Serbia, “JCWE” Skopje, Macedonia, “United Women” Banja Luka, BiH, “Helsinki Citizens Assembly” Banja Luka, BiH, “Women to Women” Sarajevo, BiH, Foundation “Cure” Sarajevo, BiH, “Women's Forum” Bratunac, BiH, “LARA” Bijeljina, BiH “Bridge” Višegrad, BiH, “Future” Modriča, BiH, “Women's Center” Trebinje, BiH, “Women Can Do It” Banja Luka, BiH, “Association of Women” Vukovar, Croatia, “Center for Legal Assistance for Women” Zenica, BiH, and “CEE Network for Gender Issues” Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Representative of “United Women” Banja Luka participated at the **European Commission consultation panel with civil society organizations** related to preparation of the country progress reports as a part of European Integrations. Consultation panel was held on 24 June 2010 in Brussels, Belgium, and Kvinna till

Kvinna Foundation from Sweden facilitated participation of women's organizations from the Western Balkan Region. We focused on presenting situation related to prevention and fighting violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and emphasized need for more active role of official authorities in providing support and assistance for women victims in the practice. We also had the opportunity to network with other women's NGOs in the Western Balkan Region and the European Union, and share information and experiences of civil society work on fighting violence against women.

Representative of "United Women" Banja Luka participated in the workshop on **"Strategies for Monitoring of the Implementation of Laws on Domestic Violence"** organized from 4 to 7 October 2010, in Sofia, Bulgaria, by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, and the Advocates for Human Rights, with the support of the Open Society Institute and OSI Governance Program and UNIFEM. The Workshop gathered NGO representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Turkey. Objectives of the workshop were gaining knowledge about effective monitoring strategies, sharing and exchanging ideas on monitoring strategies, strengthening individual knowledge and skills of women NGO activists to monitor all laws and legislation relevant to domestic violence in the national context, and strengthening organizational capacities to carry out advocacy based on monitoring results.

6. Strategic Priorities in the Work of United Women Banja Luka during 2011

„United Women“ Banja Luka will focus on two program areas – **violence against women and strengthening women at decision making positions**, as defined during process of program and organizational evaluation conducted in the period November – December 2010.

As a part of program area – **violence against women** – “United Women” Banja Luka will focus on **improving services for women victims of violence with objective of ensuring their access to justice, and public advocacy for real implementation of domestic laws and public policies, as well as the international legislation obligatory for Bosnia and Herzegovina** in the area of prevention and fighting violence against women and other forms of gender based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Planned activities of “United Women” Banja Luka in this area in 2011 are following:

- Providing continuous assistance and support for women and children victims of violence through ensuring access to free legal assistance, advices, and information about rights of women victims of violence that are guaranteed by domestic and international legislation;
- Providing psychological support through SOS telephone, and ensuring accommodation in period of acute violence, and support in rehabilitation process for women and children victims of domestic violence;
- Public advocacy activities and lobbying for changes of gender discriminatory legislation and public policies in BiH, as well as full implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska, and other laws and public policies in the area of prevention and fighting gender violence;
- Monitoring of judicial proceedings in the area of gender based violence in Republika Srpska with objective of improving understanding of authorities and responsibilities of judicial institutions and other subjects of protection in cases of gender based violence, and increasing capacities of local nongovernmental organizations for monitoring judicial proceedings in this area in BiH;
- Improving cooperation of institutional and nongovernmental subjects of projection of women and children from domestic violence through public advocacy activities for development and full implementation of the joint protocol for support and assistance for victims of domestic violence in Republika Srpska;
- Improving access to information about social rights guaranteed by domestic and international legislations for women in Republika Srpska, and public advocacy for improving legislative framework in this area;
- Public advocacy for gender sensitive and responsible budgeting in the area of protecting women's human rights and gender equality in BiH;
- Strengthening cooperation with women's nongovernmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region through planning and implementation of joint projects and public advocacy activities for full implementation of women's human rights on life without violence;

-Improving public awareness on the issue of violence against women and trafficking of women through education of various target groups, media activities, campaigns, and other public advocacy activities.

Within the program area – **strengthening women at decision making positions** – “United Women” Banja Luka will focus on **empowering women to participate in political and social changes through their active role in development of public policies and political decision making at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

Planned activities of “United Women” Banja Luka in 2011 in this area are following:

- Supporting women in political life and at decision making positions at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through education, capacity building, and public advocacy activities for participation of women in negotiations about future organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Strengthening cooperation of women’s nongovernmental organizations and women at decision making positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina with objective of joint work on women’s priorities and advocacy for women’s human rights and gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Work with electronic and printed media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, improving awareness of women and men journalists in BiH about gender equality, and public advocacy for gender sensitive media reporting;
- Improving public awareness about importance of active participation of women in public life and political decision making in BiH through education of various target groups, media activities, campaigns, and other public advocacy activities.

„United Women“ Banja Luka will continue activities on developing internal capacities and organizational development.

7. Organizational Structure of the United Women Banja Luka

Nada Golubović – Executive Director of the Association, (BSc. Technology, Faculty of Technology, Specialization in Medical Biochemistry)

A. Members of Management Board:

Vlado Cvijić, Executive Director of NGO “Krajina” Banja Luka, President of the Board

Dijana Pejić, Program Manager of NGO “Genesis” Banja Luka, Member

Dragana Dardić, Program Director, NGO Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, Member

Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska, Member

B. Professional Staff:

Aleksandra Radeta Stegić – Secretary of the Association, Professor of History (BA. History, Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department for History)

Lana Jajčević – Lawyer, Project Coordinator, (BA. Law, Faculty of Law Banja Luka)

Natalija Petrić – Practicing Attorney, Legal Advisor, (BA. Law, Faculty of Law, Barrister Exam, M.A. in Gender Studies, Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, University of Sarajevo, BiH, PhD Candidate in Gender Studies, University of Novi Sad)

Dijana Đurić – Clinical Psychologist, Supervisor and Psychotherapist in the Safe House Banja Luka (BA. Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, M.A. Student of Psychology, Banja Luka)

Miroslav Samardžić – Financial Manager, Project Coordinator, Graduated Economist (BSc. Economics, Faculty of Economics, Banja Luka)

Aleksandra Petrić – Human Rights Advisor, Deputy Executive Director, (BA. Law, Faculty of Law, Banja Luka, M.A. International Human Rights, Joseph Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver, Colorado, USA)

Minja Damjanović – Project Coordinator, Graduated Economist (BSc. Economics, Faculty of Economics Banja Luka)

Amela Bašić – Coordinator of the Safe House Banja Luka, Graduated Psychologist (BA. Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department of Psychology)

Dragana Miljević – Social Worker of the Safe House, Banja Luka (BA. Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department of Social Work)
Nada Jeličić – Housekeeper, Safe House Banja Luka, High School
Marjeta Grbić – Nurse, Safe House Banja Luka, High School
Gordana Vrbica – Nurse, Safe House Banja Luka, High School
Jasminka Pavić – Nurse, Safe House Banja Luka, High School
Milica Smiljanić – Chief Nurse, Safe House Banja Luka, University Level Degree

C. SOS Telephone Volunteers:

Amela Bašić, Graduated Psychologist (BA. Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department of Psychology)
Anja Damjanović, Student of Economics, (Faculty of Economics Banja Luka)
Minja Damjanović, Graduated Economist (Faculty of Economics Banja Luka)
Jovanka Ivković, Economic Technician, High School
Jelena Jeličić, Student of Design, (Faculty for Electronic Business and Design Banja Luka)
Maja Kovjениć, BA. Candidate in Psychology, (Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka)
Iva Papić, Graduated Psychologist (M.A. Student of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department for Psychology)
Branka Spremo, Student of Serbian Language and Literature, (Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department of Serbian Language and Literature)
Snežana Spremo, Student of Psychology and English Language and Literature, (Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Departments of Psychology, and English Language and Literature)
Stanka Spremo, Student of French Language and Literature (Faculty of Philosophy Banja Luka, Department of French Language and Literature)

8. Financial Overview of the United Women Banja Luka for 2010

No.	Donor	Title of the Project	Contracted Amount in BAM	Received Amount in BAM in 2010	Variance BAM
1	EED Germany	Gender Equality in BiH	238.611 (*171.135 received in 2009)	55.350	-12.126
2					-
6	City Administration Banja Luka	Co-financing of the running costs –Safe House and Campaign against violence	64.000	62.000	-2.000
7	Government of Republika Srpska	Co-financing of the running costs –Safe House	132000	132.000	
8	Center for Social Work Banja Luka	Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Violence	81.212	81.212	
9	Emmaus	Comprehensive Approach in Solving the Issue of Child Pornography in Bosnia and Herzegovina	38.115	38.099	-16
10	UNIFEM /MOVIE	Video Report	10.000	9.939	-61
11	UNIFEM	Gender Responsible Budgeting	7.580	7.580	
12	Vesta Tuzla/EUEIDHR	Increasing Gender Sensibility of Budgets as a Part of Reform Changes in a Proces of the European Integrations and a Basis for Strengthening Rights of Women in BiH	22.727	9.090	-13.637
13	Rosa Luxemburg	Action for Equal Participation	68.454	68454	

	Foundation Germany	and Opportunities for Women in Political Life of BiH			
14	Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation Sweden	Woman and Law 143	84.865	84.865	
15	Transcultural Psychosocial Educational Foundation BiH TPO	Strengthening Women Voters	15.911	15.433	-478
16	Fund Open Society Institute (FOSI)	Introducing Women About their Social Rights	118.817	118.817	
17	Ministry of Finance of Republika Srpska Government	One Time Assistance for the Safe House	300	300	
18	Gender center of Republika Srpska Government	One Time Assistance for the Safe House	150	150	
19	Health Insurance Fund of republika Srpska	Payment of Sickness Leave	4.485	4.485	
	Child Protection Fund of Republika Srpska	Maternity leave compensation	6.343	6.343	
	UNDP	Monitoring Judicial Processes in the Area of Sexual and Gender Based Violence	56.000	16.800	-39.200
	Balkan Aid Foundation	Supporting capacity Development of United Women Banja Luka	9.988	9.988	
	Lara Bijeljina	Street Action	250	250	
22	Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH	Resources for Emergency Needs of the Safe House	16.500	16.500	
23	Regional Center for Gender Equality Zagreb-Gender task Force	Women Make Changes in BiH	1.418	1.222	-196
24	Individual donations/Exhibition of the Women Beneficiaries of the Safe House		2.473	2.473	-
25	Interest rate for 2009	Per all bank accounts	499	499	-
26	Membership fee 2010		-	-	-
27	Transfer from 2009	Per all bank accounts and projects	81.789	81.789	-
	Total		931.525 (*171.135)	823.638	-67.714